

RemarksA. Period For Reply

A shortened statutory period for reply was set to expire three months from the mailing date of the outstanding Office Action of May 20, 2003.

B. Status

The outstanding Office Action of May 20, 2003 was a final action.

C. Disposition of Claims

Claims 15-17, 20-21, 25, 27, 32-33, 35-36, 38-39, 43-46, and 49-50 are pending.

D. Application Papers

The drawings that were filed on October 17, 2001 (with the filing of this case) were accepted by the Examiner. This is appreciated.

E. Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

This case does not claim domestic or foreign priority.

F. Attachments

Applicants filed two PTO-1499 forms with the filing of this case. Both of these forms have been signed by the Examiner and all of the references have been initialed. This is appreciated.

G. The Office Action of May 20, 2003G.1. Response to arguments

On pages 2-4 of the Office Action, the Patent Office responded to applicants' arguments. This is appreciated.

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G.2. Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

On pages 4-9 of the Office Action, claims 1-14, 18, 19, 22-25, 28-31, 34, 40-42, and 45-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Contadini (US 6,219,960). This rejection is respectfully traversed. However, to expedite prosecution of this application, the claims have been amended in accordance with the allowable subject matter. Please see below.

G.3. Allowable Subject Matter

On page 9 of the Office Action, claims 15-17, 20, 21, 26, 27, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 43, and 44 were allowed. This is very much appreciated.

H. Amendment of claims

Claims 1-14 have been canceled.

Claims 15-17 are allowed.

Claims 18-19 have been canceled.

Claims 20-21 are allowed.

Claims 22-24 have been canceled.

Claim 25 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 26. There are no intervening claims.

Claim 26 has been canceled.

Claim 27 is allowed.

Claims 28-31 has been canceled.

Claims 32-33 are allowed.

Claim 34 has been canceled.

Claim 35 is allowed.

Claim 36 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 37. There are no intervening claims.

Claim 38 is allowed, but has been amended to be independent and incorporate the subject matter of its base claim 36.

Claim 39 is allowed, but has been amended to be independent and incorporate the subject matter of its base claim 36.

Claims 40-42 have been canceled.

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Claims 43-44 are allowed.

Claims 45-46 depend from claim 25, which has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter.

Claims 47-48 have been canceled.

Claims 49-50 depend from claim 36, which has been amended to incorporate allowable subject matter.

Claims 51-52 have been canceled.

P. Summary

Allowance of claims 15-17, 20-21, 25, 27, 32-33, 35-36, 38-39, 43-46, and 49-50 is respectfully requested.

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 8-20-03
SIGNATURE OF PRACTITIONER

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